

WORLD VOYAGE OF THE NAVY

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campaign on behalf of the wealthy malefactor class, trying to prevent the fleet from going to the Pacific. It can not prevent it. I will tolerate no assault upon the navy or upon the honor of the country, nor will I permit anything so fraught with menace as the usurpation by any clique of Wall Street Senators of my function as Commander-in-Chief."

The fleet sailed from Hampton Eoads on December 16, 1907. It passed in review before the President who had gone to Hampton Eoads on the *Mayflower* to be present at its departure. It was composed of 16 battleships, with officers and crews numbering about 12,000 men. The fleet went first to San Francisco through the Straits of Magellan under command of Admiral Eobley D. Evans. At that point the command was turned over to Admiral C. S. Sperry, Admiral Evans being relieved at his own request. The President had always held Admiral Evans in high esteem as a naval officer, and in accepting his request he wrote to him, March 23, 1908: , "It is with very great regret that at your own request I relieve you from command. You have now practically finished your active service in the United States Navy; and you have brought your long and honorable career, identified to a peculiar degree with the whole history of the navy, to a close by an achievement which marks the entrance of the United States into the rank of naval powers

of the first class. In your early youth as a
young officer
you won a signal gallantry in the Civil War.
You have
closed your career by conducting a great
battle fleet from
the North Atlantic to the North Pacific in a
manner which
has shown you to be a master of your
profession. The
fleet comes to San Francisco in better shape
than when it
left Hampton Eoads; better fit for service in
every way; and
the officers and men owe no small part of their
improvement
in their profession to the mastery of your
profession which
your handling of the fleet has shown.